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5/1/20 Press Conference on COVID-19 (from Pensacola @ 2 PM)

- They have completed about 403,000 tests in Florida
- Moving into Phase One, there is a belief that testing needs to be readily available. They will make sure of that.
 - This will be the 10th drive-thru testing site (at University of West Florida)
 - When a cluster develops, they use testing to isolate people
- This testing site will be a two-lane drive-thru in partnership with the National Guard, starting with 400 tests a day
 - There has not been enough demand around the state for testing, but if they need more they will do more
 - At drive-thru sites around the state, they have done 100,000 tests
 - Anyone 18+ can get tested, minors need parental consent
 - Right now, they are doing a soft open with law enforcement
- They are going to do additional drive-thru sites: Miami Beach is included in this
- Walk-up testing sites: They've done 10 so far, about 10,000 tests completed.
- They have acquired a mobile testing lab, plan to drive it around the state and do rapid testing
- DeSantis states that in Florida they've done more with nursing homes and long-term care facilities than other states, the fatality rate for this group is lower.
 - The National Guard teams in the nursing homes have done 12,000 tests in 80 facilities
 - The problem was asymptomatic staff members spreading it in the facility, but they have devoted more resources to it
- Partnering with private sector:
 - Partnering with Surgeon General to allow licensed pharmacists to administer COVID-19 tests. Walgreens has opened drive-thru sites and will open antibody testing sites. CVS, Walmart are doing something similar.
- Antibody testing:
 - Will get hundreds of thousands of tests, will test health care workers and first responders first
 - If you have antibodies, you have already had the disease
 - Findings from universities around the country show that there are more people with antibodies than positive tests, which means there is already group immunity and that the death rate and hospitalization rate is lower, especially with the bulk of the workforce.
 - The risk gets higher with age and with co-morbidities
- PPE:
 - The state is planning ahead with Phase One and PPE. We don't know if there will be a rebound, so in preparation Florida has signed a long-term deal with

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Honeywell to receive 12 million N-95 masks. Allows use of them now but also have them ready in case of a new wave of cases. Will be distributed to healthcare workers and first responders statewide. Any not used will be stockpiled

- 20 million masks, 10 million gloves, 1.5 million face shields, and more PPE distributed statewide already in Florida.
- DeSantis states we should be preserving the PPE we have now.
- Just received a decontamination system from the federal government. They will be collecting and cleaning N-95 masks from hospitals. Located at the Hard Rock Stadium
- In Florida, we have flattened the curve and we have more hospital beds available statewide than we did at the beginning of the pandemic
 - In Broward, Memorial Healthcare collapsed an entire empty ICU unit
 - There are thousands of beds ready to for use
 - Hospitalizations have been far less than expected
 - In March it was predicted that 460,000 people would be hospitalized in Florida, but that is not the case.
- Text FL COVID-19 to 888777 for text updates
- Comments from Rep. Matt Gaetz
 - Proud of President Trump's acknowledgements of how hard Florida has worked, especially all of the bipartisan work. Thanks the guardsmen and women
 - In Northwest Florida, the CEO of Baptist Hospital was able to get swabs and kits early due to their work
 - The HCA systems were having challenges with getting equipment from their providers, but the governor and Emergency Management worked hard to get them what they need
 - Measures taken in nursing homes have been very offensive. The Florida DOH has been very proactive when a sign of the virus shows up in these facilities
 - Law enforcement was concerned about a migration of people from Louisiana spreading it in Northwest Florida
 - Vacation rentals are an important issue for them. Because of population density they rely on them instead of hotels. When it is safe and appropriate, they will open vacation rentals.
 - Advice to their counties or cities: if they have concerns, meet about and discuss those in order to figure out what your community is ready for. Governor has been relying on local knowledge during this situation.
- DeSantis: monitoring of travelers
 - We have 2 million more people than New York but they have 20 times the fatality rate in New York

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- There was a problem with people fleeing shelter-in-place to Florida (from New York and Louisiana). They put in screening and quarantine measures quickly, and they were able to prevent a huge outbreak.
- Repeat from earlier conference: Mentions Department of Homeland Security's BioDefence Center study on what kills the virus: heat and humidity make the virus unstable and rapidly kill it.
 - Outdoor recreation is really low risk.
- Going forward: Northwest Florida should be a big anchor for them going forward.
- The virus isn't going to go away, but there is hospital capacity available and the positivity rate here is low (4%-6% positive)
- The virus is thriving with large groups of people, especially indoors and in confined spaces. These are causing those "super-spread events."
- High-risk groups should continue to limit their exposure and stay home.
- Thinks Florida will bounce back quicker than anybody, but they need to be responsible
- Answers to Questions:
 - Regarding the national guard in long-term care facilities: if there's a need, they go to that facility. If you can identify a staff member that was infected, then you can identify who they spread it to.
 - The tests are sent to a variety of different private labs, but sometimes they get a lot of tests and there's a backup (so you'll get result dump days where it looks like a bunch of new positives have shown up). Now that the federal government has raised the reimbursement level to \$100/test, more labs are able to afford to do this which means a higher turnaround.
 - The mobile lab will have the point of care test, which is a 45 minute result for multiple swabs. This would be great for long-term care facilities. In the future they would like to test family members of long-term facility members so that they can potentially see their family if they're not positive.
 - Restrictions are necessary, but people don't think of the cost and negative results of these restrictions: for example, not seeing family.
 - Asks people to pay less attention to the number of positive cases and the rate to which they are coming back positive. 1000 new cases sounds worse than 1000 positives out of 20,000 tests. Recently with testing, since they've been expanding criteria, it's lowered the positivity rate. The national rate is 18%, Florida's is around 5%-6%. Going forward with mitigation he is asking: what is the stress on the hospital system, are there available beds?
 - Moving forward with recovery, what is the criteria between different areas of the state?
 - The state of Florida as a whole met the federal criteria for reopening, even including Miami. Most of the state outside of Southeast Florida is going in the same direction. If things change, he'll adjust the plans for

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reopening. Southeast Florida should be able to get on track, and they are an important part of the economy of Florida.

- What can be expected as far as getting lab results?
 - They are hoping to turn test results around in 24-48 hours going forward with the new system with new labs. The earlier you get the result the more meaningful it is.

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5/1/2020 Press Conference on COVID-19 (from Jacksonville @ 11 AM)

- This weekend, National Guard Testing sites will have done 100,000 tests
- As part of Phase One, beginning Monday May 4th the State Park System will reopen
 - Outdoor transmission is less likely than transmission in enclosed environments
 - Department of Homeland Security's study on heat and humidity on the virus concluded that sunlight rapidly killed the virus, making outdoor, daytime environments lower risk
 - DHS states sunlight kills the virus on surfaces on quickly, the virus is less stable over all with high heat and humidity
 - That doesn't mean you can't transmit it, but it's low risk for open spaces with social distancing and it's good for the people of Florida
- 2 weeks since Jacksonville mayor opened the city parks and beaches
 - Negative backlash against that decision stating there would be a major outbreak
 - There was no major outbreak, only a few new cases from a county of 1 million people, and there weren't that many new cases to begin with (1.8% positivity rate)
 - Hospitals in Duval: 42% of the beds in the county are empty. There is no overflow
 - Memorial Healthcare in Broward has already collapsed an ICU unit because there weren't enough cases and it was empty
 - The test center in the Jacksonville Jaguars stadium is doing about 271 tests a day, supply exceeds demand right now, could do more tests
 - Nassau county, St. Johns has also done well
- Recommending that restaurants do outdoor seating based on DHS findings
 - Cites events from other states where indoor events caused a rapid spread due to close contact for a sustained period of time. Being inside is more high risk
- The hospital capacity
 - Miami-Dade has almost 40% of cases in the state, but about 40% of their hospital beds are available
 - 591 people in the ICU state-wide, lowest number since the beginning of the pandemic in Florida. We're doing better than a lot of states
- The parks are an important part of phase one, more details to come but it will roll out on Monday
 - Using Jacksonville and Mayor Curry's actions as a model
- Curry's comments
 - Jacksonville was able to open before because they had help with getting testing and PPE quickly
 - The idea about opening the beaches was based on data and logic, it made sense to open wide spaces and continue to social distance

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- Questions
 - Asking if DeSantis has heard comments about people not wanting to work due to unemployment paying more than what they made while working.
 - DeSantis said that he hasn't heard that. Florida has a great economy and Floridians want to work. This was an external event and working will contribute to a sense of normalcy. It won't happen overnight though.
 - How do we know what the true rate of infection is without widespread testing especially in rural areas?
 - DeSantis states they are establishing more drive-thru sites, walk-in sites, and nursing home testing. They are looking to establish even more, but Jacksonville isn't filling the current testing capacity right now. But the positive rate is so low that it's indicating it's not spreading here.
 - They are getting the antibody tests today, and that will give a better idea of how this is spreading. It's likely that people have been exposed and already have antibodies based on data from universities around the country studying it (including University of Miami). If the antibodies are prevalent at a really high rate, that means the death rate of the virus is much lower than what we know now. Also, having antibodies is good to know because it means there is a lower risk of infection (ex: if nurses in nursing homes have antibodies, they are less likely to get infected and spread it to their patients).
 - If you're under 50 with no significant health issues, there is overwhelming data that you are at low risk (especially low risk for young kids).
 - European studies might indicate if the kids are likely to infect people, that parents are more significant transmitters. But there is not enough data on that yet.
 - Question about exceptions to the South Florida counties with the state park openings.
 - Parks, marinas, and golf courses did open in South Florida last week. The state parks will lay out parameters for opening
 - Why has it taken so long to address the unemployment benefits?
 - The system had a lot of problems and was overwhelmed. There are 50,000-70,000 payments a day. But DEO has been reaching out to people, and there are a number of reasons that someone may not have qualified. They are fixing stuff every single day, they took it down last week in order to dedicate time to just paying benefits. They also have to deal with 100,000 paper applications.
 - Is it possible that DEO has mislabeled people and said they were not qualified for unemployment?
 - Historically, the average person that applies is ineligible. However, DeSantis has waived everything he could waive in order to pay people

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who are eligible that normally wouldn't be. A lot of that has been reengineering the system.

- DeSantis: targeted interventions to protect the at-risk populations, like sending PPE specifically to nursing homes. Social distancing is still needed, but we are not New York. Continued focus on helping the at-risk population but using common sense and allowing low-risk openings with social distancing. There's a difference between social control and doing things for public health.